



# San Diego City Attorney **MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 26, 2006**

**Contact: Maria Velasquez, Communications Director (619) 235-5725 (pager & voicemail) [mvelasquez@saniego.gov](mailto:mvelasquez@saniego.gov)**

### **CITY SETTLES ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST RANCHO PENASQUITOS FARM OPERATOR**

**San Diego, CA:** Leslie Farms, Inc., the operator of an agricultural farm in Rancho Penasquitos, will pay \$54,879.88 to settle an environmental protection lawsuit filed by the San Diego City Attorney's Office. The farm is located on the south side of the 6600 block of Black Mountain Road in the City of San Diego. The case originated from an investigation that was coordinated by the City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit.

"This was a joint effort and I applaud the California Department of Fish and Game, San Diego County Environmental Health Department, and the City of San Diego's Hazardous Materials Team for their prompt response to the reported oil spill," said City Attorney Michael Aguirre.

According to Deputy City Attorney Michael Rivo, the civil complaint alleged that in March 2005, city, county and state environmental inspectors discovered multiple violations related to the company's storage of petroleum products on the property. The inspectors found oil tanks and farm equipment leaking oil within ten feet of a nearby creek, as well as a large area of grass wetland contaminated with petroleum. The owner of the property promptly had the site cleaned up after being notified of the alleged violations.

Under the terms of the stipulated civil judgment, \$15,000 of the settlement will be provided to the *Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon* for habitat preservation. The judgment also enjoins the company from committing similar violations in the future. The company agreed to the settlement without admitting any wrongdoing.

Petroleum products are known to adversely affect wildlife in a variety of ways, ranging from mechanical injury to fur and feathers to internal injury to digestive systems and immunological systems. Petroleum products are toxic to eggs of virtually all animals.

###